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ABSTRACT

The National School-to-Work Office in collaboration with the National Association for Gifted Children, the Council for Exceptional Children, the Association for the Gifted, and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted have identified 11 gifted education/school-to-work (GT/STW) models that are either best practices or unique approaches. This information packet provides an overview of one of the best practice models: the Independent Study/Mentorship program at Central High School in Texas. This program is a collaboration between Central High School and the Southeast Texas School-to-Work Partnership that offers teachers an integrated, academic curriculum in which students address workplace or community challenges. Teachers facilitate students' independent studies, and community leaders spend time in the classroom. Students select mentors, conduct research, and develop and present projects in which they contribute to their community, explore career possibilities, and engage in a trial job search. The Independent Study/Mentorship course includes six broad learning assignments and assessments, personalized by students' choices for career exploration. The class is held the last period of the day, so that students can spend at least three hours a week at the workplace. The information packet includes a program description and assessment rubrics. (CR)

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EC 308136

Gifted Education/School-to-Work Models: Best Practices and Unique Approaches

The National School-to-Work Office has been collaborating with the National Association for Gifted Children, The Council for Exceptional Children, The Association for the Gifted, and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted on a national effort to identify exemplary Gifted Education/School-to-Work (STW) models. Our purpose has been to forge new relationships between the STW and gifted education communities around common and critical goals: teaching rigorous and relevant academic skills, identifying and developing talent, and guiding career development. We believe sharing these practices will expand learning opportunities for all learners by building an even richer and more inclusive STW system, and by "raising the bar" on learning and teaching for all students.

We use the term "gifted and talented," which is broader than "academically talented" (used in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act), because state definitions of giftedness mostly use some variation of the current federal definition, which is (1988 Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act):

> *Children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.*

Last year, letters were sent to state-level STW and gifted education directors and association leaders to help identify gifted education models that also exemplify STW. Submissions were also requested on all gifted education Listservs. We received 23 competitive submissions.

A technical review process was used to ensure that all submissions were thoroughly and impartially evaluated. An outside review panel was assembled which comprised experts in gifted education and STW. Their experience included state gifted education and STW leadership, local STW program evaluation, and post-secondary gifted education research. All submissions were evaluated according to criteria consistent with guidelines made available to all applicants.

Five **Best Practices** and six **Unique Approaches** were selected by the panel. The designation "Best Gifted Education/STW Practice" signifies excellent progress in implementing a comprehensive STW system that challenges high achieving/gifted and talented students. The designation "Unique Gifted Education/STW Approach" recognizes a unique program element. Unique Approaches did not present all key components of a comprehensive STW system (school-based, work-based, and connecting activities), or provide sufficient information about how gifted and talented students are served.

Programs evaluated as very strong:

- specifically serve gifted and talented students;

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• demonstrate a school-based learning component that supports and builds on a work-based learning component, and provide students with high level academic and technical skills and opportunities for career exploration and guidance;

• demonstrate a work-based learning component connected to academic classroom learning, and prepare students for the diverse skills needed in today's high-performance workplaces;

• present connecting activities that build and maintain linkages between students, educators, the workplace, parents, and others in the community;

• provide evidence about effectiveness, including indicators that it could be replicated in diverse settings throughout the country; and

• address identified priorities such as strategies to: improve math and science achievement, serve gifted students in rural and urban areas, enhance middle school achievement, and promote linkages with institutions of higher learning.

The following is a brief description of one of the five **Best Practices** selected:

INDEPENDENT STUDY/MENTORSHIP AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL (TEXAS): This collaboration between Central High School and the Southeast Texas School-to-Work Partnership offers teachers an integrated, academic curriculum in which students address workplace or community challenges. Teachers facilitate students' independent studies, and community leaders spend time in the classroom. Students select mentors, conduct research, develop and present projects in which they contribute to their community, explore career possibilities, and engage in a trial job search. Course objectives have been adapted to fit the State's Advanced Social Studies objectives.

The Independent Study/Mentorship course includes six broad learning assignments and assessments, personalized by students' choices for career exploration. The class is held the last period of the day, so that students can spend at least three hours a week at the workplace. During the 1997-1998 school year, students interned in pediatrics, law, social work, chemical engineering, optometry, computer engineering, orthodontics, television broadcasting, and real estate.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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INDEPENDENT STUDY/MENTORSHIP
(Central Senior High, Beaumont Texas)

I. Type of Program, Vision, and Goals

Senior GT students select mentors in a professional field of interest.

Through research, job shadowing, and interactions with this mentor students gain first-hand experience.

A product for the community is created as a result of this experience and other opportunities to hear community leaders discuss the problems of Beaumont.

Students will become contributing members of their community and gain insight into a career possibility.

Students present their experience in a formal exhibition before an invited audience at the end of the year.

II. Talent Development

Assignments are broad-based and given at six week intervals. Students personalize them using their individual career choices. Time management, scheduling, and specific tasks are independently pursued by the student.

Students develop resumes, write cover letters, contact mentors, experience personal interviews, and compose follow-up letters. Students set their own weekly appointments with the mentors.

Research from periodicals, professional journals, and interviews initiates the students' investigation of the field and continues throughout the year.

Assessment includes speeches, journals, and individual conferences.

III. Partnerships

Sixteen students participated during the 1997-98 school year with mentors in television broadcasting, pediatrics, heart cathetarization, law, social work, chemical engineering, optometry, real estate, banking, computer engineering, orthodontics.

After four years of the program, other mentors have included surgeons, writers, veterinarians, musicians, entrepreneurs, teachers, school administrators, doctors.

IV. Connecting Activities

Students spend at least three hours a week on the job site.

Students compile a research notebook investigating educational requirements, skills needed, problems in the field, technological developments, future predictions.

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ISM Rubric

(First Six Weeks)

The following are requirements for the first six weeks.

Travel/Permission Slip	(5 pts.)	_____
Learning Style Test	(5 pts.)	_____
Resume and Cover Letter	(20 pts.)	_____
Research portfolio	(10 pts.)	_____
I-Search paper	(25 pts.)	_____
Role play interview	(10 pts.)	_____
Future/technology assignment	(25 pts.)	_____
Journal/Self-Appraisal	(10 pts.)	_____

Resume and Cover Letter
You will send this to your mentor when you request your first interview. We will discuss how resumes are developed during class.

Research Portfolio
This should be a three-ring binder that you will use all semester to collect material about your topic. This will be displayed at your final presentation. You should collect five articles/interviews this six weeks.

Future/technology assignment
You will give a speech on a short research assignment about the future in areas of employment, lifestyle, technology, and/or change as it will affect your life.

Journal and Self-Appraisal
You will keep a journal of your activities during the year. It's important to learn to evaluate yourself; so this will be a part of the rubric for each six weeks.

I-Search paper
You will receive a separate assignment sheet for this.

Role play interview
We will practice interview skills and proper etiquette during such times in a role-play situation where you will be both the interviewer and the interviewee.

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MENTORSHIP AND INDEPENDENT STUDY
(Second Six Weeks Rubric)

This six weeks you will begin your independent study. Time management and professional etiquette will be vital for the success of this experience. Keep this rubric with you and turn it in at the end of the six weeks. Following is an explanation of each item on the rubric.

Interview--following your letter requesting an interview, you will visit with your mentor the first time. At that point you and the mentor will decide if the relationship can be productive. Afterwards, you will write an acknowledgement/thank you note to your mentor, confirming your understanding of the schedule you have set up. You should arrange the schedule to be in class on Monday and Wednesday of each week unless there are extenuating circumstances. All other days you should be off campus unless you prearrange with me.

Weekly Planner-- Using a calendar format, write down your schedule for the week. As you complete or change this schedule, record it on your time card. Due Monday. You should arrange to spend three hours with your mentor or at the work site per week; that should be reflected on your card. It should be signed each visit.

Journal--Record what you did, what you learned, and your reactions to what happened. Also, write down ideas you have for future plans. This will be a valuable record when you put together your presentation at the end of the year. You should write a minimum of <u>two pages a week</u>. Be very specific. Use the style of the I-Search paper. Turn this in on Monday

Speech--We will work on an attention-getting opening. You will present an overview of the career. Include training, skills needed, job opportunities, salary, etc. This will be given the sixth week.

Research Portfolio--This notebook you will display at your presentation. It should include an annotation for each entry. There should be interviews (other than your mentor), books, articles, professional articles, catalogs, and any other item that would be helpful to someone wanting information on this career/profession.

Monday Discussion Group--This time together will be used to share some outside reading, learn new problem solving techniques, thinking, study techniques and to discuss problems encountered during independent study. Each Monday be prepared to particiapte. You will know in advance if outside reading is necesary.

Notify your mentor if you need to change plans!

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RUBRIC

Mrs. Wilson's visit	(10 pts.)	_____
Interview with mentor	(10 pts.)	_____
Thank-you, acknowledgement letter	(5 pts.)	_____
Monday Discussion Group	(15 pts.)	_____
Weekly Time card (approved)	(15 pts.)	_____
Journal (wks. 1-5) (due Mondays)	(20 pts.)	_____
Speech	(15 pts.)	_____
Research Portfolio (15 articles)	(30 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

Twenty percent of your grade will be the evaluation of your mentor. The mentor will return a check list the fifth week.

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Blast out the good word about all that you learn with your mentor.

MENTORSHIP AND INDEPENDENT STUDY
(Third Six Weeks Rubric)

This six weeks you will continue your independent study. Time management and professional etiquette will be vital for the success of this experience. Keep this rubric with you and turn it in at the end of the six weeks. Following is an explanation of each item on the rubric.

Weekly Planner-- Make a weekly plan and then as the week progresses write what you actually do on your verification sheet. Be very specific about what you will do; then adjust if plans change at the last minute.

Journal--Record what you did, what you learned, and your reactions to what happened. Also, write down ideas you have for future plans. This will be a valuable record when you put together your presentation at the end of the year. You should write a minimum of two pages a week. Be very specific. Use the style of the I-Search paper.

Pictures--At your presentation, you wil have a display table. Begin taking pictures to use on that table. Take at least twelve pictures of your activities, your job site, and your mentor.

Speech--This will be your **final exam**. We will work on an attention-getting opening. You will present:
1)career opportunities in Beaumont
2)how local problems impact your career
3) how your mentor/career solves these problems

Research Portfolio--This notebook you will display at your presentation. Place previous summaries in a notebook. Collect 15 more or review an entire book on your career. You should include an annotation for each entry. There should be interviews (other than your mentor), books, articles, professional articles, catalogues, and any other item that would be helpful to someone wanting information on this career/profession. (Do not use encyclopedias.) Begin to gather the names of professional magazines and organizations related to your career.

Professional Organizations and Magazines--Find out the name of professional organizations your mentor belongs to, conferences he/she may attend, and magazines published by professional organizations. You might use these for your research portfolio.

Book Review-- Select a book on thinking or life-learning (***Learning Revolution*** by Gordon Dryden and Jeannete Vos, ***Seven Habits of Highly Effect People*** by Covey, ***Peak Learning*** by Ronald Gross,***Serious Creativity*** and ***de Bono's Thinking Course*** by Edward De Bono ***The Healing of America*** by Marianne Williamson, or any other similar book.) Write 1-2 page summary of the book and how it might apply to your life.

Speaker Notes--Make notes on the speakers especially emphasizing the problems discussed by the speakers.

Remember to notify your mentor if you need to change an appointme

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RUBRIC

Weekly Planner (document time)	(15 pts.)	_____
Journal (wks. 1-5) (2 pages)	(20 pts.)	_____
Speaker notes	(20 pts.)	_____
Research Portfolio and Notebook (15 new entries)	(30 pts.)	_____
Pictures (at least 12)	(10 pts.)	_____
Learning/Thinking Book Review	(10 pts.)	_____
Professional Magazines and Organizations	(10 pts.)	_____
Brainstorm of possible problems to solve with product	(10 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

Your mentor's evaluation will be 20% of your grade. Please be sure you turn it in on Monday of the sixth week.

Begin to plan your product this six weeks. It should be a service for our community. Do not wait until the last minute to begin working on it.

Rubric for Speech (final exam)

Opening	(15 pts.)	_____
Body		
Opportunities	(15 pts.)	_____
Problems	(20 pts.)	_____
Eye Contact	(10 pts.)	_____
Time (10 minutes)	(10 pts.)	_____
Closing	(10 pts.)	_____
Visual	10 pts.)	_____
Overall effect (memorized)	(10 pts.)	_____
Total		_____

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RUBRIC for FOURTH SIX WEEKS (INDEPENDENT STUDY)

You should begin work on your product this six weeks in addition to continuing work on your research portfolio. You must document five hours of work each week during the six weeks.

JOURNAL

Write two pages each week. Be specific about how and what you learn. You may also include information from your research in your journal entries.

VALIDATION SHEET

You will need to document five hours of visits and/or research each week. You might consider setting goals for each visit with your mentor. Write out questions you want to ask, etc.

PRODUCT

By the third week, be sure to have finalized what your product will be. Remember that it should be something of use to the community. It should include information you have learned that would be helpful to the working environment or those who use the services of your mentor. Submit your idea by the end of the third week.

CRITIQUE

You will need to critique three presentations during the six weeks. These should not all be by teachers. You might include a club program or a Sunday School lesson Write the critique in paragraph form. Your critique should include the following points: date, presenter, location, topic, length of time, opening, closing, ways of involving the audience, pluses, and negatives.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

You should add another **TEN** items to your portfolio. Be sure to properly document and include a 3-10 sentence summary of the article, interview, etc. You might include an interview with someone else at your mentor's work site. Be sure to properly document each source.

SPEECH

The six weeks test will be a speech in which you use a visual and continue to perfect your openings and closings. Use anecdotes to interest the audience. The topic of the speech will be the effect of technology on your mentor/career. Analyze the changes that have occurred recently and what the future may hold as far as technology is concerned.

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Rubric for Speech

TIME		
OPENING	(2 pts.)	_____
CLOSING	(3 pts.)	_____
TECHNOLOGY (BODY)	(3 pts.)	_____
ANECDOTE/INVOLVMENT	(5 pts.)	_____
	(2 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

SIX WEEKS RUBRIC

5 JOURNALS (2 pages per week)	(20 pts.)	_____
VALIDATION (5 hrs. per wk.)	(15 pts.)	_____
PRODUCT PLAN	(15 pts.)	_____
RESEARCH PORTFOLIO (10 items)	(20 pts.)	_____
3 PRESENTATION CRITIQUES	(30 pts.)	_____
SPEECH	(15 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

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FIFTH SIX WEEKS

Graduation is literally only weeks away. You will complete the major part of your work this six weeks. You should make a list of what preparations you still need to complete to be ready for the training/college you will pursue next fall. Also you should apply for at least one scholarship. Your presentation will be early in the last six weeks; consequently, you will need to secure the place for your presentation, prepare your invitations, make a checklist of what you need to do to be ready for the presentation.

Weekly Journal and Mentor Visits

You will spend a great deal of time working on your product this six weeks. Therefore, you may not spend as much time with your mentor. Be sure to alert your mentor as to when you will visit and what you will be doing about your product. Your mentor can be of great help to you as you prepare your product; get them involved.

College check list and scholarship

Create a checklist of what you've done, and what you need to do to be ready for college. Apply for at least one scholarship. This is due by March 20.

Research Notebook

Place all your research articles, pictures, and any other material you have in a notebook to be placed on a table at your presentation. These should be organized with at least twelve pictures to use on your table. This is due March 26. Those second semester students need to add 15 articles to the research notebook

Product

Complete your product this six weeks. Be sure to get approval all along the way from me; so that it will be accepted at the end. You will show it during your presentation in May. There will be no speech this six weeks for those two semester students. Those in the second semester will give a speech in lieu of a product.

Speech/Product

Second semester students will give a speech during the sixth week. Two semester students will just show their product to me during the week and have a conference. The speech should include the following points.

1)how does technology impact your mentor's job (how has it changed his/her job in the last five years)?
2)what predictions are made about future changes in your mentor's job in the next five years?
3)what skill levels (jobs) are available at your mentor's work site?
4)how do economic conditions affect the job?
5)how do government regulations affect the job?

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Give this to me when you present your speech.

Rubric for Speech

OPENING (attention getting)	(2 pts.)	_____
CLOSING (tied to the opening)	(2 pts.)	_____
CONTENT (3 specified points)	(6 pts.)	_____
VISUAL	(3 pts.)	_____
ANECDOTE/INVOLVEMENT	(2 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

Rubric

weekly journal	(20 pts.)	_____
mentor visits (at least five)	(25 pts.)	_____
college check list	(10 pts.)	_____
scholarship application	(10 pts.)	_____
product	(35 pts.)	_____
research articles (2nd sem.)	(30 pts.)	_____
research notebook	(10 pts.)	_____
speech (2nd semester)	(15 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

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SIXTH SIX WEEKS

Presentation

You will prepare an outline for your presentation. You will discuss this with me so that we can be certain your opening and closing relate, that important information is included, and that you have chosen the best order. You may use information from your previous speeches in this final presentation. Set a conference with me two weeks before your presentation date. Select a theme for your exhibition. This will help you write your speech. The entire program should last about 45 minutes including your demonstration of your product. Allow fifteen minutes for refreshments after your speech.

Date, site, theme, and invitations

Consult you mentor for a convenient time and place for your presentation sometime between April 27-May 13. You should invite teachers (at least two), an administrator, friends, and family. You may use the school but consider using your mentor's work site. Design invitations that depict the theme of your presentation; mail these at least a week before your presentation

Presentations

You should plan to attend **ten** of your fellow classmates presentations. We all need moral support!

Notes and evaluations

You should write your mentor and thank-you note. You may want to give him/her a small token of your appreciation. This person can be a great reference in the future. Also plan to thank anyone else who helps you with your presentation. I will give you a form to evaluate the course. Your comments can make next year's course more effective.

Journal and calendars

Your final journal should be an I-Search paper about the preparation of your product and your final presentation. This will be included in your notebook. Your last validation sheet will also be included; so be sure to accurately record your activities.

Power point workshop

Learn the power point program to use in your presentation. This will be a part of the visuals in your presentation.

RUBRIC

journal and validation sheets	(10 pts.)	_____
power point use	(10 pts.)	_____
outline and practice of presentation	(15 pts.)	_____
presentation site/date/theme	(5 pts.)	_____
invitations (design, mailed)	(15 pts.)	_____
attendance at 10 presentations other than yours	(40 pts.)	_____
evaluation for the course	(5 pts.)	_____
Thank you to mentor	(10 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

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Final Presentation Rubric
(Spring '98)

Opening (Informative and attention-getting)	(5 pts.)	_____
Eye Contact	(5 pts.)	_____
Visual	(10 pts.)	_____
Content	(40 pts.)	_____
Audience Interaction	(8 pts.)	_____
Closing	(4 pts.)	_____
Time (30-45 minutes)	(8 pts.)	_____
Product	(8 pts.)	
Organization (begins on time, moves in an orderly way, journals and research portfolio available for audience to view, refreshments)	(12 pts.)	_____
TOTAL		_____

Additonal comments:

Suggestions for the mentorship class:

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